
PROGRAM— HORSEBACK RIDING



Section PH

STANDARDS FOR CAMP ACCREDITATION

Many camps offer horseback riding to their participants, either on the camp property or at a separate facility. As in other specialized program activities, safety is a central concern. The Horseback Riding standards set high expectations for trained supervision, appropriate instruction, and safety precautions, and well-planned emergency procedures.

APPLICABILITY

The Horseback Riding standards apply to all riding activities, including, but not limited to, English riding, western riding, trail riding, bareback riding, ring work, vaulting, and pony rides.

All camps, including trip/travel camps, that include horseback riding as a part of the program must score the PH section of the standards. The Horseback Riding standards are applicable as follows:

- Camps with horseback riding facilities and programs on camp property and under camp staff supervision score Standards PH-1 through PH-15. This requirement includes camps providing riding staff and equipment for user groups.
- Camps using staffed public facilities or providers for riding activities score Standards PH-11 through PH-17.
- Camps that have their own riding programs *AND* use staffed public facilities for some activities score Standards PH-1 through PH-17.
- If user groups provide their own riding leaders or equipment for horseback riding activities, these standards are not scored. However, user groups should be advised of any requirements or conditions for use (see Standard PD-5). Camps should consider the requirements of the Program—Horseback Riding standards when establishing guidelines for user groups.

Foundational Practices

Standards that were initially examples of best practices in the industry have become so accepted that they are considered foundational practices. Some have also been adopted as regulations and laws by local, state, and national bodies. These practices continue to be important to the delivery of a positive camp experience. It is assumed that they are in practice as applicable in every camp. The annual review of these foundational practices is scored in Standard OM-1.

A Foundational Practice related to horseback riding is:

- Maximum workday for horses

CAMPS WITH RIDING STAFF AND FACILITIES

If only pony rides are offered (either by the camp or at staffed public facilities), Standard PH-1 is the only applicable standard unless the ponies are stabled on the property- then PH-9 and PH-10 are also applicable. Standards PH-1 through PH-10 are applicable to all camps that provide all other horseback-riding activities for campers, staff, or groups. Camp staff are responsible for the site, horses, medication, and equipment. Standards PH-1 through PH-10 DO NOT APPLY to camps that ONLY use staffed public facilities for horseback-riding and NEVER provide their own riding programs.



PH-1 PONY RIDES

MANDATORY (PH-1A)

Does the camp have procedures in practice for the conduct of pony rides that:

PH-1A: Require the use of protective headgear specifically designed for horseback riding? YES NO

PH-1B: Provide an adequate number of qualified persons assisting with mounting and dismounting, leading the horse or pony, and assisting riders, as necessary? YES NO

PH-1B: Utilize sound horses or ponies, and equipment that is appropriate in size and type and is in good repair? YES NO

INTERPRETATION: Pony rides (conducted at the camp or at staffed public facilities) are activities in which the horse or pony is led at a walk by a trained individual other than the rider, or the animal is controlled by a mechanical device that leads it at a walk. At no time is the rider expected or allowed to control the horse or pony. As a rule, the rider is lifted on and off the animal or mounts from a mounting platform.

"Qualified" refers to individuals who have been trained specifically to handle and control horses, to assess the level of care and assistance needed for riders, and to respond appropriately to rescue or emergency situations. The number of staff or assistants required will depend on the activities, riding area, and clientele. For riders with special needs, specific therapeutic riding training should be required for staff.

The *ACA Accreditation Standards Resource CD-ROM* should be consulted for additional information on pony rides.

COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATION: Director/staff explanation of activity procedures; visitor observation of pony-ride activity.



Does not apply if the camp does not provide pony rides.

If the camp only offers pony rides, the rest of the section does not apply unless the ponies are stabled on the property (then also score PH-9 and PH-10).

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps
- Short-term resident programs
- User-group programs

PH-2 SUPERVISOR QUALIFICATIONS

Does a staff member who meets the following qualifications oversee all horseback-riding facilities, staff, and program operations:

PH-2A: Certification — holds one of the following:

- Certification as an instructor from a nationally recognized organization or riding school, or
- Documented endorsements of successful experience in formal horseback-riding instruction? YES NO

PH-2B: Experience — has at least six-weeks management or supervisory experience at a horseback-riding facility? YES NO

PH-2C: Age — is at least 21 years of age? YES NO

Does not apply to pony rides.

Applies to:

- **Day camps**
- **Resident camps**
- **Short-term resident programs**
- **User-group programs**

facilities for horseback-riding and NEVER provide their own riding programs.

INTERPRETATION: "Instructor" refers to the completion of courses that require skills and competency in riding and that focus on riding-instruction techniques, safety, as well as stable management.

"Documented endorsements" may include letters of reference from former employers, students, or co-workers, as well as brochures or advertisements announcing programs where the individual is listed as instructor. "Formal instruction" requires that the program for which the individual instructed was an established program that involved a systematic course of training and required a demonstration of prescribed levels of knowledge and competency.

"Experience" should include background in supervising a total operation including instruction, stable management, care and feeding of horses, scheduling, staff supervision, and equipment care.

The ACA website, www.acacamps.org, and the *ACA Accreditation Standards Resource CD-ROM* website links should be consulted for additional information on certifying bodies for horseback-riding professionals.

COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATION: Visitor observation of certification card or other documented evidence; director/staff explanation of qualifications.

WRITTEN DOCUMENTATION IS REQUIRED

PH-3 SUPERVISION OF RIDING STAFF

Does the camp have documentation of regular observations by supervisors to verify that riding staff:

- Enforce established safety regulations,
- Provide appropriate instruction,
- Identify and manage environmental and other hazards related to the activity and the participants, and
- Apply appropriate emergency and rescue procedures related to the riding activities and participants?

YES NO

Does not apply
to pony rides

INTERPRETATION: A critical factor concerning a staff's level of effectiveness is appropriate training that is then supported by supervision, reinforcement, coaching, correcting, and instruction, as needed. The intent of this standard is that supervisors document their observations of riding staff conducting activities with participants. Such documentation may include checklists, copies of performance evaluations, or notes taken by supervisors prior to, during, or following horseback-riding activities.

"Regular observations" refers to observing the riding staff on a schedule determined by the camp, based on factors such as the complexity of the riding program, length of season, and background of riding instructors.

This standard differs from Standard HR-20 in that this requirement specifically addresses the documented observation of staff members who are leading horseback-riding activities with participants. Standard HR-20 deals with general supervision of camper/staff interaction and does not require documentation.

"Established safety regulations" may include general camp safety regulations developed in Standard OM-8 and those directives established specifically for riding activities. "Appropriate instruction" means that the instruction is tailored to the age, ability level, and special needs of the participants. "Hazards" may include such factors as trail conditions, temperament, and behavior of horses. The emotional state of participants (e.g., fear, excitement, endurance, etc.) may also constitute a potential hazard.

Because supervisors may not have an opportunity to observe staff who are responding to actual emergencies, supervisors should verify that staff are aware of and able to institute the appropriate procedures for handling possible emergencies (see Standard PH-11).

COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATION: Visitor observation of documentation of observations; visitor observation of riding activities.

WRITTEN DOCUMENTATION IS REQUIRED

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps
- Short-term resident programs
- User-group programs

PH-4 STAFF SKILL VERIFICATION

Does not apply
to pony rides

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps
- Short-term resident programs
- User-group programs

Does the camp have written evidence that the skills of each staff member teaching or assisting in horseback-riding activities are verified and evaluated by the horseback-riding director or supervisor? YES NO

INTERPRETATION: It is the camp's responsibility to verify the skills of staff members, even of persons with certifications, who are involved with horseback-riding activities, based on recommendations of authoritative sources. Staff should be evaluated prior to leading any activities.

COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATION: Visitor observation of written documentation of skills evaluation.

WRITTEN DOCUMENTATION IS REQUIRED

PH-5 SUPERVISION RATIOS

Does not apply
to pony rides

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps
- Short-term resident programs
- User-group programs

Does the camp have written policies that specify:

PH-5A: Minimum ratios of trained riding staff to participants required for each type of horseback-riding activity? YES NO

PH-5B: Ratios for supervision of campers and youth groups that include a minimum of two staff members at all times, at least one of whom is an adult? YES NO

INTERPRETATION: Ratios should be established in accordance with those recommended by authoritative sources and appropriate to the type of riding activity, the characteristics of participants, and the riding area. Camps should also consider staff use of horses and equipment during time off, days off, etc., and establish policies that may include different ratios with trained riding staff. The certified/experienced staff member who oversees the camp horseback-riding program is in the best position to determine appropriate ratios for each type of activity.

Staff should be instructed as to their location and responsibilities during specific activities. The layout of the physical facility, the instructional program, the nature of the trails, and the campers' skills are basic factors that should be considered when planning for adequate supervision.

COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATION: Visitor observation of written policies including ratios; director/staff explanation of implementation; visitor observation of randomly selected riding activities.

WRITTEN DOCUMENTATION IS REQUIRED

PH-6 RIDING EQUIPMENT

Does the camp require that riding equipment be safety checked each day of use, and that equipment that is not in good repair be removed from service? YES NO

Does not apply to pony rides

INTERPRETATION: Riding equipment should be appropriate for its intended use and sized correctly for both rider and horse. Riding equipment, including saddles, bridles, girths, ropes, etc., should be checked carefully for such factors as excessive wear or deterioration. The equipment check should assure an adequate supply of appropriately sized equipment for participants.

COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATION: Visitor observation of equipment in use at riding activities; director/staff description of system in use.

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps
- Short-term resident programs
- User-group programs

PH-7 CLASSIFYING HORSES

Does the camp require that the riding staff classify horses for various rider skill levels prior to use by participants? YES NO

Does not apply to pony rides

INTERPRETATION: Evaluating horses is an especially critical concern early in the season when they have not been ridden regularly. Animal disposition can change from year to year or with the addition of new horses. Staff should have comprehensive knowledge of the horses and their suitability for various riding levels.

COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATION: Director/staff description of classification procedures.

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps
- Short-term resident programs
- User-group programs

PH-8 HORSE SUITABILITY

Does the camp require that riding staff check daily the physical soundness of each horse and remove unsound horses from the riding program? YES NO

Does not apply to pony rides

INTERPRETATION: A check for "physical soundness" includes checking for problems that may affect the performance or disposition of the horse, such as saddle sores, lameness, or a sore mouth.

COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATION: Director/staff description of procedures used.

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps
- Short-term resident programs
- User-group programs

PH-9 RIDING FACILITIES

Are the stables, corrals, paddocks, and riding rings of the camp:

PH-9A: Located away from living areas, with procedures in practice to control access? YES NO

PH-9B: Clean, free from accumulation of manure, and provided with a plentiful supply of fresh water? YES NO

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps
- Short-term resident programs
- User-group programs

INTERPRETATION: "Away from" means that living areas (other than those for persons caring for horses) are located far enough from livestock to avoid increased flies, insects, undue odor, increased dust and dirt, etc. Access may be controlled by such things as scheduling, education, or regulations, as well as with posted "off limits" signs and physical barriers. Campers should never be around the horses without supervision. Fresh water should be readily available, but should not create a potential safety hazard (e.g., having tubs of water inside the riding ring).

COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATION: Visitor observation of stable and corral areas; director/staff description of procedures to maintain cleanliness and control access.

PH-10 HORSE MEDICATIONS

Does the camp require that all horse medications are:

- Handled only by persons trained or experienced in their safe use, and
- Secured in an area away from camper access and locked up when not in use? YES NO

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps
- Short-term resident programs
- User-group programs

INTERPRETATION: Medications used for horses, ponies, and other livestock are normally very potent because of the size of the animals for which they are developed. Such medications may be flavored or scented so that the animals are more receptive to their use. To avoid accidental ingestion, campers should not have access to these items.

This standard requires that all horse medications be stored under the control of the appropriate riding staff. Secured areas could include areas off limits to all people except designated staff, as well as locked cabinets or containers.

Fly spray or wipes, commonly used for horses, can be a concentrated insecticide. All users should be trained in their application.

ALL RIDING ACTIVITIES IN AND OUT OF CAMP

Standards PH-11 through PH-17 are applicable to all riding activities, including riding activities provided or staffed by the camp *AND* those conducted at staffed public facilities. Accordingly, all camps should score Standards PH-11 through PH-17.

← except pony rides



PH-11 SAFETY REGULATIONS AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Has the camp established written safety regulations and emergency procedures that are specific to the horseback-riding activities offered?

YES NO

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps
- Short-term resident programs
- User-group programs

INTERPRETATION: "Safety regulations" include such factors as requirements for helmets and boots, procedures for approaching horses, spacing and distance between horses while riding, procedures for riding near and crossing public roads, facility access and use limits, trail procedures, etc. If the camp is utilizing a staffed public facility or provider, rules and procedures may be a combination of those established by the riding facility and those specified by the camp.

Emergency procedures should be developed to handle horseback riding-related accidents, such as a fall from a horse or an injury from a kick. They should also include steps for responding to emergencies, such as a runaway horse or situations occurring on trails away from the central camp area where transportation of victims must be considered. If using a staffed public facility or provider, emergency procedures may be a combination of those established by the riding facility and those specified by the camp.

COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATION: Visitor observation of written regulations and procedures.

WRITTEN DOCUMENTATION IS REQUIRED



PH-12 SAFETY ORIENTATION PROCEDURES

Does the camp require that the staff provide participants with a safety orientation, based on written procedures, before engaging in horseback-riding activities?

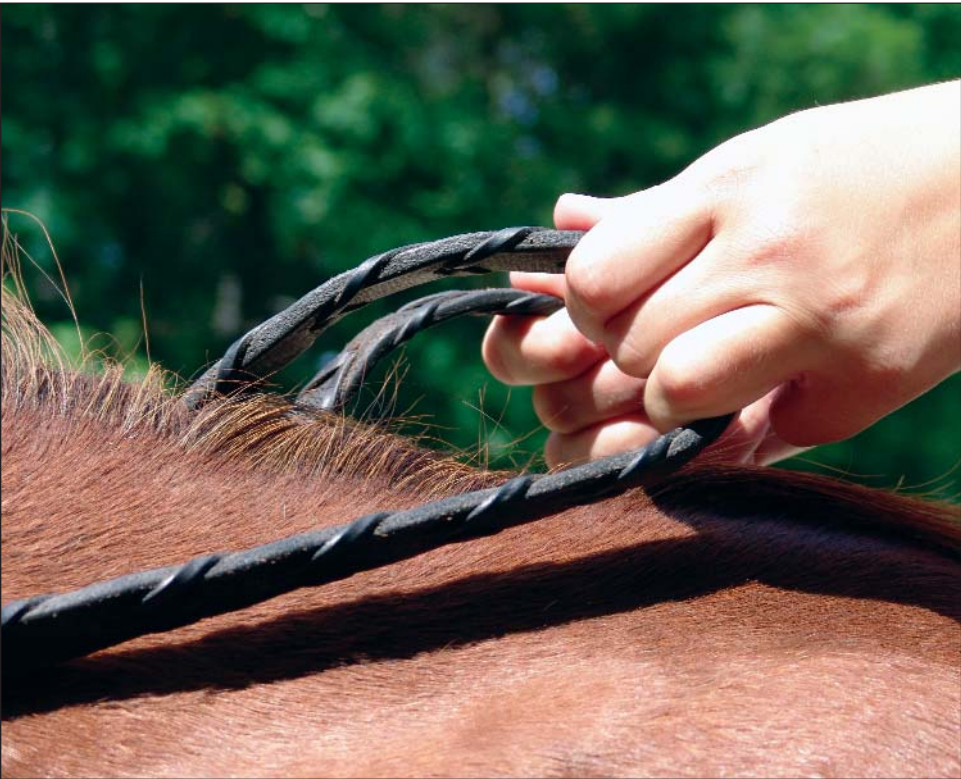
YES

NO

INTERPRETATION: The safety orientation should include safety rules and regulations, proper use of protective equipment, safety signals and practices to be used, as appropriate, and necessary information on the characteristics and boundaries of the area. When utilizing staffed public facilities or providers, the camp may supplement the safety orientation of the facility with specific safety regulations for campers. The orientation should be consistent with the safety regulations for horseback-riding activities (see Standard PH-11). All rules should be covered in every orientation. “Written procedures” may involve posted signs, a checklist, or a bulleted list of items used by staff in an oral orientation.

COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATION: Staff/camper description of orientation procedures; visitor observation of a written checklist of safety procedures.

WRITTEN DOCUMENTATION IS REQUIRED



- Applies to:**
- Day camps
 - Resident camps
 - Short-term resident programs
 - User-group programs

PH-13 FIRST AIDER

Does the camp require a staff member to be on duty at each riding activity who has current certification from a nationally recognized provider of training in first aid, including training on bloodborne pathogens? YES NO

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps
- Short-term resident programs
- User-group programs

INTERPRETATION: "On duty" means readily available to render needed assistance. For riding in a ring or corral in camp, the first aider could be on duty in a centrally accessible area. For trail rides, a first aider should be with the group. Camps using public facilities may either bring their own certified personnel or have a written policy that requires that only facilities with appropriately certified personnel are used. Nonmedical religious camps meet this standard by providing a person who has the qualifications specified in writing by the religious program to meet emergency situations.

COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATION: Visitor observation of certification card(s); director/staff explanation of procedures to provide coverage; and/or written policy for use of staffed public facilities.

WRITTEN DOCUMENTATION IS REQUIRED

PH-14 RIDER CLASSIFICATION

Does the camp require that riding staff:

- Evaluate and classify each participant's riding ability, and
- Assign each participant to horses, equipment, and activities commensurate with his or her ability?

YES NO

Does not apply to pony rides.

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps
- Short-term resident programs
- User-group programs

INTERPRETATION: This standard applies to instructional and recreational riding activities for individual campers, participants, and staff. Evaluation does not necessarily require a riding test. Participants may be interviewed and assigned to appropriate horses or activities in a controlled environment. Even if assignments presume a beginner or nonskilled level for everyone, individuals should still be evaluated to identify their experience with the activity, comfort level, and/or fears that could affect their safety. Participants should demonstrate essential skills before being permitted to go on trail rides. When using staffed public facilities, camp staff accompanying groups should see that campers are evaluated and assigned appropriately.

COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATION: Director/staff description of procedures utilized.

PH-15 RIDER APPAREL

MANDATORY (PH-15A)

Do camp policies in practice require the following safety apparel be worn by campers and camp staff:

PH-15A: Protective headgear specifically designed for horseback riding?

YES NO

PH-15B: Shoes or boots which provide protection from:

- Injury from being stepped on by horses, and
- If stirrups are used, feet becoming wedged into the stirrup (when stirrups are not specifically designed to prevent this occurrence

YES NO

PH-15C: Long trousers?

YES NO

INTERPRETATION: This standard does not require the camp to use a particular brand of helmet, but highly recommends one that is approved by the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM). In consultation with authoritative sources, the camp director should determine the appropriate type of helmet, based on the type and level of activity. Most horsemanship organizations can provide a list of protective headgear that has undergone safety tests and has met minimum criteria for protection. A helmet should fit the rider comfortably, not obscure the rider's vision, and be secured with a chin strap. Vaulting while riding a horse is an exception to Standard PH-15A. Vaulting is an activity in which campers perform a combination of gymnastics and dance routines on a moving horse.

Footwear must be enclosed with a flat sole and discernible heel to prevent the foot from sliding forward through the stirrup. Any enclosed shoes, such as athletic shoes, are acceptable when tapaderos, "peacock" stirrups, or other devices designed to protect the rider's foot from slipping through the stirrup are used.

COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATION: Visitor observation of horseback riding activity; director/staff description of policy and procedures in practice.



Does not apply to vaulting activities on a lunge line.

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps
- Short-term resident programs
- User-group programs

PH-16 PUBLIC PROVIDERS OF HORSEBACK RIDING

Does not apply if the camp never uses staffed public facilities or providers for riding activities.

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps
- Short-term resident programs

Does the camp implement a policy to select only provider(s) of horseback-riding activities that:

PH-16A: Provide an adequate number of riding staff whose qualifications have been verified by the provider? YES NO

PH-16B: Provide physically sound horses suitable for the skill levels of participants? YES NO

PH-16C: Utilize equipment that is appropriate in size and type and is in good repair? YES NO

INTERPRETATION: Information about the facility's riding instructor qualifications, equipment, and operating procedures may be found either in promotional materials for the public provider or in the leasing/use agreement between the camp and the provider, or may be verified by personal observation and inquiry by a camp representative. Qualifications and staff-camper ratios must be consistent with those recommended by appropriate authoritative sources.

COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATION: Director description of policy and procedures used in selection.

PH-17 CAMPER SUPERVISION OFF-SITE OR WITH PUBLIC PROVIDERS

Does not apply if the camp never uses off-site facilities or public providers for horseback-riding activities.

Applies to:

- Day camps
- Resident camps
- Short-term resident programs

Are staff accompanying campers to horseback-riding facilities off-site or with public providers trained on written procedures that specify their supervisory roles and responsibilities? YES NO

INTERPRETATION: When campers are at riding facilities off-site or with public providers who bring instructors, horses, and equipment to the camp, staff must know their supervisory responsibilities. Written procedures need to clarify responsibilities for such factors as location of staff, camper behavior management, communication, and health-related matters. Responsibilities of staff will vary, depending on the location, type of activity, clientele, and staff provided by the facility or contracted service.

COMPLIANCE DEMONSTRATION: Visitor observation of written procedures; director/staff explanation of training and supervision practices.

WRITTEN DOCUMENTATION IS REQUIRED